

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 IO-13 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-01 TRSE-00

XMB-04 OPIC-06 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01 OMB-01 AF-10

ARA-10 EUR-12 ITC-01 /143 W

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R 190140Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7758

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 2129

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, PFOR, SN, JP, AS, NZ, ASEAN

SUBJECT: LEE KUAN YEW SPEAKS OUT ON ASEAN AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

REF: SINGAPORE 2115

1. SUMMARY: IN A WIDE-RANGING MAY 6 INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL RICHARDSON OF MELBOURNE AG, (REFTEL) PEE KUAN YEW SPOKE EXTENSIVELY ON ASEAN RELATIONS WITH JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. HIGHLIGHTS OF PUBLISHED TRANSCRIPT FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. LEE SAID THAT ASEAN LEADERS HAD DECIDED UPON A WORKING SUMMIT IN AUGUST AND ALSO TO INITIATE A HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE WITH JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER "TO DEFINE THE COMPLEMENTARY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF ASEAN AND JAPAN IN GREATER ECONOMIC COOPERATION." ACCORDING TO LEE, INITIATE FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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PARTICIPATION OF PRIME MINISTERS FRAZIER AND MULDOON CAME FROM GOA AND GONZ. LEE STATED THAT JAPANESE ECONOMY IS SATURATED AND THAT THERE EXISTS POTENTIAL FOR INDUSTRIAL OVERFLOW INTO NON-COMMUNIST SEA COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN ENVIRONMENTALLY UNATTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES. LEE OPINED THAT COMPLEMENTARITY OF JAPANESE AND SEA ECONOMIES MAKES LARGE SCALE COOPERATION POSSIBLE.

3. LEE ASSERTED THAT SINGAPORE'S INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING SOME KIND OF ASEAN-GOJ RELATIONSHIP AKIN TO THAT EMBODIED IN LOME COVENTION IS SHARED BY OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES. HE SAID THAT ASEAN WOULD CONTINUE TO REFINE ITS THINKING ON SUBJECT BEFORE SUMMIT AND DURING SUMMIT ITSELF, IN CONSULTATION WITH FAKUDA.

4. REGARDING POSSIBLE ROLE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND IN POSSIBLE ASEAN-JAPAN ASSOCIATION, LEE SAID "THEY HAVE A DIFFERENT CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE... BUT THEY WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER THEY WANT TO BE IN THIS GROUPING". LEE FORESEES POSSIBILITY OF ASSOCIATION DEVELOPING OVER 10-15 YEARS, WHICH COULD BE LOOSELY COMPARED TO THE EXISTING BETWEEN EC AND AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN, PACIFIC (APC) COUNTRIES. LEE SAID ONE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH A GROUPING WOULD BE THAT MEMBERS COULD HAVE A VOICE AT MEETINGS SUCH AS RECENT LONDON SUMMIT THROUGH JAPANESE, WHO WOULD BE ABLE TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES AS WELL AS FOR ASEAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

5. LEE DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON A FORMAL ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THESE COUNTRIES. HE SPECIFICALLY RULED OUT A YAOUNDE CONVENTION-TYPE ARRANGEMENT, SINCE SUCH A CLOSED CLUB INCLUDING REVERSE PREFERENCES, WOULD AROUSE U.S. AND EC. "I DO NOT THINK WE SHOULD LIGHTLY TOSS AROUND AN EXCLUSIVE, WESTERN PACIFIC GROUP OR CLUB IN WHICH WE'LL HAVE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH EACH OTHER AND EXCLUDE OR PUT THE AMERICANS ON WESTERN EUROPEANS

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TO DISADVANTAGE". "BUT THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF QUID PRO QUO WORKED OUT IN WHICH IN RETURN FOR TRANSFERS OF TECHNOLOGY AND CAPITAL IN THE LOWER AND MIDDLE TECHNOLOGY RANGES... AND ALSO ACCESS TO MARKETS, THERE 'LL BE MORE PURCHASES OF MACHINERY AND FOOD FROM COUNTRIES LIKE JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND".

6. LEE DENIED THAT ASEAN WOULD PRESSURE JAPAN TO LIBERALIZE TRADE BARRIERS AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. LEE DESCRIBED ASEAN-GOJ RELATIONSHIP AS "COOPERATIVE EFFORT", ONE WHERE BOTH SIDES SHOULD BE GUIDED BY ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST.

7. LEE COUNTERED ASSERTION BY RICHARDSON THAT ASEAN WOULD BE MAIN BENEFICIARY OF ANY LOWERING BY AUSTRALIA OF ITS TRADE BARRIERS. LEE NOTED THAT AUSTRALIA ENJOYED SUBSTANTIAL TRADE SURPLUSES WITH ASEAN COUNTRIES AND THAT REMOVAL OF TRADE BARRIERS WOULD REMOVE A SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE "FRUSTRATION AND BITTERNESS". ACKNOW-

LEDGING AUSTRALIAN AID TO ASEAN COUNTRIES, LEE LIKENED IT TO GIVING "TOFFEES AND CHOCOLATES AWAY" AND NOT AS A WAY TO CREATE A RELATIONSHIP" WHICH GENERATES MUTUAL ESTEEM, RESPECT AND ADULT, CONTINUING INTERDEPENDENCE". LEE HINTED THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD BITE BULLET AND DISCONTINUE INEFFICIENT, UNECONOMIC LINES OF PRODUCTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SUCH PRODUCTION "DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. AND IF THAT IS THE WAY THE WORLD IS GOING TO BE --- IF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF ASEAN AND AUSTRALIA IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND THE UNDERDEVELOPED WORLD, THEN I SEE STRIFE".
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